

"Well,
I decla-uh,"

SAID THE SOUTHERN BELLE



1 THE MAINE lucker was trying a puff of my Bond Street tobacco, as she recalled past. "Ma'am," he was saying, "I like that! Nice body! Smoke nice, too!"



2 THE STOPPED dead, turned with fire in her eyes. "He means the tobacco, sir," I said. "Bond Street. Made by Philip Morris, with a new aromatic tobacco."



3 "Well, I decla-uh," she said. "All the gentlemen in Atlanta smoke Bond Street, 'cause they know the ladies like it—even in the parlor. Are you from the South, sir?"



4 THE MAINE lucker passed, Yankee busser struggling with Yankee downpour. "Says 'ad, side," he drooled with a smug South-ern accent. "South Portland!"



"change to
BOND
STREET
...for
fragrant
smoking!"

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THE GREAT FOOTRACE CONTINUED

ringtailed, headbustle' mauler from the hanks of the Shawmuck. I fight all the time exceptin' when I'm eatin', and I eat all the time exceptin' when I'm fightin'. I strangle bars with my bar hands for a livin'. I claw wildest tails insidder terbacum, I've slept with ever widdler under forty in the County and some of 'em twist, and I kin run like a colt with a coldest cob under his tail. I use minners like you to bust mush hook with when I go fishin'.

For answer, Flash Perkins jerked off coat and shirt. He threw his hat on the ground. It landed as though he was going to hit Johnny.

—Fight! Fight! somebody yelled.

A big crowd had already gathered. But smiling all the time, Flash sat down on the sidewalk and pulled off his shoes.

—Come on, Jack, he said. No use waitin' till Fourth of July. I'll race you right now from here to the Baptist Church, or anywhere else you wanna run to.

—Make it the church, Johnny said.

He pulled off coat, tie, and shirt. He sat down on the ground and pulled off shoes and socks. Bare to the waist, he shoved through the crowd to Flash Perkins.

In the Saloon window, the reflections of two young men leaned slightly forward. The sun shone on the hard, broadshouldered body of Flash Perkins, who stood in stocking feet a trifle shorter



FALSE START weeks before the race was canceled by Carney (in derby) so he could make his bet. He had a plan to beat Flash.

than Johnny, shone on the shag of his brown hair, his curly beard, his smiling teeth, shone on the lean ribs and snowy shoulders of Johnny Shawmuck, shone on the black and chestnut-colored hair.

—Set us off, Fred, Flash said.

—Just a minute, Cash Carney said, stepping up. Put your duds on, John.

—What for? Flash said.

—This boy ain't racing today, Cash said. He's under contract to me, and he don't race for any but big stakes.

—If he don't race me now, he's a yellowbelly coward.

—He's not racing, Cash said. That's final. You're afraid to run him regular and official, Perkins, because you're afraid of losing money.

—Get a hat! Flash Perkins yelled.

—Here's a hat somebody yelled.

—I'll give 'im odds of two to one, Flash said.

—You just say that, Perkins, Cash said, because you know nobody'll bet you. If someone came along with a little hard coin, you'd try to wussod out from those odds, and you know it.

—Try me and see, Flash said.

Cash Carney reached in a luck pocket and moodily took out a leather soap-purse. The crowd became reverently silent as Cash took five gold coins out of the purse and held them in the cup of his hand.

—Here's fifty dollars says you're a liar, Perkins, Cash said.

—I'll cover it, Flash said, or if I can't, my sidekicks will before the Fourth of July.

—I'll take some of that, myself, Garwood Jones said. Friendship is friendship, John, but a bet on Flash Perkins is a sure thing.

Johnny began to put on his clothes. He fixed his tie in the plate-glass window, where the uncracked images of the crowd mixed incessantly. The hard, high nasal talk raged in his ears.

—I'll see you racetime, Jack, Flash said. I promise not to beat you more'n a city block.

Flash Perkins walked straight into the hatching doors of the Saloon without loitering to put out his hand. The doors slapped

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